

# PROJECT INFORMATION



**>> konstruktiv**

**Structurally embedding  
systematic orientation  
to new target groups  
at the University of Bremen**

## Structurally embedding systematic orientation to new target groups at the University of Bremen

<b>Funded by:</b>	Federal Ministry of Education and Research
<b>First funding period:</b>	August 1, 2014 to January 31, 2018 (3.5 years)
<b>Amount of funding for 1st funding period:</b>	2,926,401 euros
<b>Potential duration of 2nd funding period:</b>	February 1, 2018 to June 30, 2020 (2.5 years) (new application required)
<b>Project type:</b>	Research and development project

### PLANNED MEASURES

- > Part-time master programs
- > Graduate certificates
- > Modular studies

#### ... in the areas

- > Informatics / Information Technology / Digital Media (FB 3)
- > Production Engineering with the two majors „Energy / Environment / Sustainability“ und „Aeronautics“ (FB 4)
- > Human and Health Sciences (FB 11)

## AIM AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

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### TARGET GROUPS

- > Persons who possess a (first) academic degree (as a rule with vocational experience) who are in employment or caring for family members
- > Persons returning to the work force who already have a first university degree as well as job-seeking graduates
- > Persons who obtained their academic qualification(s) abroad

### PARTICIPANTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BREMEN

- > The Vice Rector for Education and Studies
- > Faculties 3, 4 und 11 (deans and professors),
- > Additional subjects are planned to be included in Phase 2
- > Staff Unit for Education and Studies
- > Administrative Department for Student Affairs
- > Center for Multimedia in Education (ZMML)
- > Academy of Continuing Education (project management)

### PROJECT LEADER / CONTACT

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The main aim of the konstruktiv project is to structurally embed a systematic orientation to new target groups at the University of Bremen. Its focus is on persons with vocational experience who already possess a (first) university degree and who are employed or have care responsibilities, as well as suitably qualified people who wish to return to the work force, job-seeking graduates, and persons who obtained their academic qualifications abroad. The University of Bremen's Academy of Continuing Education is creating student-friendly offers of part-time master programs, graduate certificates, and modular studies in the areas of computer science, production engineering, and health care, i.e. fields in which the region and Germany as a whole has a growing shortage of skilled personnel and a correspondingly high demand.

The curricula of these part-time studies and programs of continuing education are designed to be as flexible as possible: by means of so-called 'modular toolkits', students with diverse educational biographies will be able to access higher learning more easily. Moreover, to speed up the process, students can apply to have their existing professional qualifications recognized. Such flexible structures will make it possible to take account of new or changing needs and requirements without having to create a whole new study program. It is intended that working with modular toolkits and subsequently flexible curricula will in the long term become the generally accepted modus operandi for shaping program formats on the master level. The konstruktiv project will thus have a structure-building effect on the university as a whole.

## SHORT PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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Among the design principles behind the planned curricula is the close-knit interweaving of academic training and vocational practice. Enterprises and other organisations benefit from the scientific findings produced by a university that is strong in research. They will be brought in to contribute as co-designers of tailored curricula and programs. Opening to new target groups also means providing proactive guidance and support throughout their learning experience at the University of Bremen. In this respect, the project will develop suitably designed instruments and procedures and put them into practice. The concepts and approaches developed in the context of konstruktiv are to be embedded and permanently anchored in the structures of the University of Bremen. This will ensure that opening university studies to new target groups and their specific learning strategies in different phases of their life courses is sustainable.

The University of Bremen is faced with the challenge of orienting future offers of academic studies and continuing education to new target groups with a diverse range of learning biographies and objectives. This calls for a systematic rethink of numerous didactical and organisational aspects of higher learning. The university is in a good position to deal with such a challenge: it combines its strength in research with research-based learning and orientation to the practice, and has always faced up to its social responsibility. In the area of continuing education, it already boasts a comprehensive range of offers, planned and carried out by the Academy of Continuing Education in cooperation with various institutes and university faculties. The University of Bremen sees itself as a place of life-long learning. Together with the three other public universities in the federal state of Bremen, it proactively propagates greater permeability or interchange between levels of education and vocational training and currently acts as coordinator of a Bremen project called 'Open Universities'.

With the Academy of Continuing Education, continuing education and life-long learning are already structurally anchored at the university. The konstruktiv project takes developments a step further: it aims at achieving reciprocal interchange between the areas of traditional full-time masters degrees and continuing education that were hitherto considered as completely separate entities. This impacts not only on the design of offers; it also gives rise to issues concerning the legal framework of higher education, the division of tasks within the university, and the willingness of professors to engage in creating modules designed to fit the needs of working students.

The core component for developing a flexible and student-friendly offer in the form of part-time master programs, graduate certificates, and modular studies comprises what we call 'modular toolkits'. These 'toolkits' contain modules that take account of the special requirements of working students and people with vocational experience; for example, by including offers of blended learning, the 'research workshop', a practice transfer project, and forms of 'independent studies'. The sources are existing, or specially adapted, modules taken from current full-time masters programs or courses of continuing education offered by the University of Bremen and its partner universities, as well as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) of different universities and new modules developed in the context of the present project. The project also develops instructions on how to use the module toolkits. These instructions also explain how a module can be substituted for competences acquired in the course of professional life (if necessary supplemented with 'independent studies'). They also explain how the range of different modules contained in the toolkits can serve to make up master and certificate curricula with considerably fewer electives and compulsory electives than usually the case for academic studies. This makes it possible to design courses of study that conform to the individual educational biographies of working students as well as those with family members to care for, job seekers, and holders of academic qualifications obtained abroad.

A tailored orientation to new target groups can only be achieved by closely interweaving academic study with vocational practice. Modules are therefore based on real-world knowledge and issues as identified by practitioners: private and public enterprises and institutions become places of learning at which curriculum development takes existing skills profiles into account. This type of matching concept especially enhances the career prospects of people returning to work and job-seeking academics. In addition to developing a "welcome structure" for the new target groups, the project also develops measures to ensure that the learning process of working students is actively accompanied and supported from beginning to end: this encompasses recognition of existing skill-sets and designing individually tailored curricula, but also support in acquiring the competences required for self-directed and research-based learning.

The first phase of funding, which started on August 1, 2014, focuses on developing and testing exemplary courses of academic study and building up the structure for advisory services and support. In addition and subsequent to this, the underlying fundamental questions are identified and addressed. In a second phase, these pilot study courses are implemented and the lessons learned in Phase 1 form the basis for opening the university to new target groups: Phase 2 also encompasses the inclusion of additional thematic fields and faculties, embedment of the approaches, rules and processes identified so far in the structures and procedures of the university, as well as conclusion of cooperation agreements with the respective public and private enterprises and institutions.

# WORK PACKAGES



QP = work package with cross-sectional tasks  
TP = thematic work package

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